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SUBJECT: SOMALIA - PUNTLAND PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS,  
CONTINUED

REF: NAIROBI 46

¶1. (SBU) Summary: As noted reftel, Abdirahman Mohamed "Faroole" was elected the fourth President of the semi-autonomous region of Puntland on January 8. Mohamed's inauguration on January 11 should cap an election that has been free of acrimony and whose results no one at this point appears to be disputing. Numerous conversations with Puntlanders since Mohamed's election, however, suggest that his presidency could well be a continuation of business as usual in a region where corruption and government go hand-in-hand. End summary.

¶2. (SBU) January 8 saw the election of Abdirahman Mohamed "Faroole" by a margin of 49 - 17 in the third round over competitor Abdullahi Ahmed Jama. In winning the presidency, Mohamed outpolled seven competitors who competed for the votes of Puntland's 66 parliamentarians. Joining Mohamed in office will be Vice President Abdisama Ali Shire. Shire entered the election in competition against a field of six other competitors, but after Mohamed was elected President, the two Majertein vice presidential candidates withdrew their candidacies, as tradition mandates. (Note: Mohamed is a member of the Majertein clan, and tradition does not permit that members of one clan hold the region's two leadership positions.)

#### Biographical Details

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¶3. (SBU) President-elect Mohamed is about 64 years old and is a fixture on the Somali leadership scene. We are told he was President of Somalia's Central Bank during the Siad Barre era, and has served variously as Minister for International Cooperation during the October 2004 - January 2005 interim presidency of Mohamed Abdi Hashi, as a founding member of the Puntland regional administration, and as Minister of Finance during Abdullahi Yusuf's presidency of Puntland from 2002 - ¶2004. Yusuf fired Mohamed as Minister of Finance, alleging "financial mismanagement." (Observers tell us that Mohamed allegedly misappropriated thousands of dollars in security force salaries.)

¶4. (SBU) Mohamed has apparently long harbored presidential ambitions. He ran for the presidency in 2005, polling third behind current incumbent Mohamud Musse Hirsi "Adde Muse" and Mohamed Abdi Hashi. In that contest, Mohamed withdrew, and threw his votes to Hirsi, who has governed since.

¶5. (SBU) Mohamed brings a certain amount of international experience to the job. He is an Australian citizen, and reportedly has a masters degree in economics from an Australian university. Still, one observer described him, in spite of his higher education, as "not refined, a village

type." Others describe him as "decisive, straightforward," and a "Puntland patriot."

¶6. (SBU) Mohamed is a member of the Majertein/Isse Mohamud clan. (The Majertein is the majority Darod/Harti subclan in Puntland.) His presidency rounds completes the "sons of Mohamud" trilogy, as former Puntland President Abdullahi Yusuf and incumbent President Hirsi are members of the Omar Mohamud and Osman Mohamud Majertein sub-clans respectively.

¶7. (SBU) Mohamed is expected to take office on Sunday, January 11. If the timetable of predecessor Hirsi is any guide, it could take as long as one month for Mohamed to name a cabinet. Mohamed's remarks to the Parliament on January 8, immediately after being elected, suggest his priorities as President. The President-elect reportedly announced a determination to crack down on piracy, attack corruption, strengthen Puntland's economy, and improve --in the wake of the October 29 Bossaso suicide bombings-- its security.

Abdullahi Yusuf Fading?  
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¶8. (SBU) Although recently-resigned Transitional Federal Government President Abdullahi Yusuf remained, in public at least, studiously neutral during the presidential campaign, his interest in being present for the Puntland elections has fed rumors that he favored one or more candidates, among them incumbent Mohamud Musse Hirsi, however. If that indeed was the case, then Yusuf's inability to engineer Hirsi's re-election (Hirsi won only 8 votes in round one and 4 in round two) suggests vastly diminished influence for Yusuf.

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